TOWN OF WINDERMERE

Town Council Meeting Minutes **July 14, 2026**

CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Andy Williams; Council Member CT Allen; Council Member Mandy David; and Council Member Tony Davit were present. Town Manager Robert Smith, ATM/PWD Tonya Elliott-Moore, Attorney Heather Ramos, Chief Dave Ogden and Town Clerk Dorothy Burkhalter were present. Absent were Council members Brandi Haines and Tom Stroup.

Mayor Williams called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and stated that a quorum was present. He then led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. OPEN FORUM/PUBLIC COMMENT (3 Minute Limit)

Mayor Williams opened the floor to the public. There were no comments from the public.

2. SPECIAL PRESENTATION/PROCLAMATIONS/AWARDS

a. Orange County Public Schools Millage Referendum

Mayor Williams welcomed and turned the floor over to Mr. Scott Howat and School Board Member Ann Douglas. Mr. Howat, Chief Communications Officer for Orange County Public Schools, introduced himself. He then gave a presentation regarding the school board's number of staff, schools, consolidation of recent schools, number of schools, Vision and Mission, empowerment standards, declining enrollments, budget impacts, and the One Mill increase on the ballot in November.

3. NEW BUSINESS

a. MINUTES

i. Town Council Meeting Minutes: June 9, 2026

ii. Town Council Mid-Year Budget Workshop Minutes: June 23, 2026

Mayor Williams introduced this item. Member Davit made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Member David seconded the motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Allen – aye, Davit -aye, and David – aye. Motion carried 3-0.

b. RESOLUTIONS/FIRST READING ORDINANCE

i. Resolution 2026-04 – Tax Reform

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WINDERMERE, FLORIDA, AFFIRMING THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION ON PROPERTY TAXES AND THEIR CONNECTION TO LOCAL SERVICES; FORMALLY OPPOSING HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1F, "SAVE OUR HOMES FROM EXCESSIVE PROPERTY TAXES."

Mayor Williams read Resolution 2026-04 for the record. Member Allen made a motion to approve Resolution 2026-04. Member David seconded the motion. Roll call vote was as follows: David – aye, Davit -aye, and Allen – aye. Motion carried 3-0.

ii. Ordinance 2026-02

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-02

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF WINDERMERE, FLORIDA, ADOPTING A SMALL-SCALE FUTURE LAND USE MAP AMENDMENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FROM AGRICULTURAL TO SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL, FOR CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY OWNED BY THE MATHEISON FAMILY LIMITED PARTNERSHIP, LOCATED AT THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS: 618 RIDGEWOOD DRIVE, AS MORE PARTICULARILY DESCRIBED HEREIN, WITH AN APPROXIMATE SIZE OF 3.37 ACRES; MAKING FINDINGS OF FACT; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS, SEVERABILITY, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mayor Williams read the title of proposed Ordinance 2026-02 for the record. He then stated that the second reading/public hearing would be at the next Town Council meeting.

iii. Ordinance 2026-03

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-03

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF WINDERMERE, FLORIDA, ADOPTING A TOWN OFFICIAL ZONING MAP AMENDMENT FROM AGRICULTURAL TO SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL FOR CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY OWNED BY THE MATHEISON FAMILY LIMITED PARTNERSHIP, LOCATED AT THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS: 618 RIDGEWOOD DRIVE, AS MORE PARTICULARILY DESCRIBED HEREIN, WITH AN APPROXIMATE SIZE OF 3.37 ACRES; MAKING FINDINGS, AND PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS, SEVERABILITY, AND OR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mayor Williams read the title of proposed Ordinance 2026-03 for the record. He then stated that the second reading/public hearing would be at the next Town Council meeting.

c. DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD

i. Case Z26-06 – 637 Ridgewood Drive - Variance request to reduce the front yard setback from 25 feet as required to 15 feet as proposed, and to reduce the Normal High-Water Elevation (NHWE) setback from 50 feet as required to a minimum of 25 feet as proposed to construct a new single-family residence and swimming pool

Mayor Williams explained that at the request of the applicant, this item needed to be tabled to the next Council meeting in August. Member Davit made a motion to table this item to the August 11th Town Council meeting. Member David seconded the motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Allen – aye, Davit-aye, and David -aye. Motion carried 3-0.

ii. Case Z26-07 – 105 Palm Street - Variance to permit the placement of a swimming pool within the front yard of the subject property, whereas the Land Development Code (LDC) limits the placement of swimming pools to side and rear yards

Mayor Williams introduced this item and turned the floor over to Ms. Amanda Warner from Wade Trim. Ms. Warner introduced and reviewed variance request Z26-07 which is to allow the construction of a swimming pool and related pool decking within the front yard. Per the LDC swimming pools and related features are to be in the side or rear yards. Ms. Warner also explained that this is a corner lot which

consists of two front yards and two rear yards, causing development constraints. She also commented on the location of the existing septic and drainfield. Ms. Warner stated that the Development Review Board heard this item and has recommended approval. Member Davit made a motion to approve the variance request. Member David. After minimal discussion was made, roll call vote was as follows: Allen – aye, Davit – aye, and David – aye. Motion carried 3-0.

iii. Case Z26-08 – 136 Oakdale Street - Request for variances to permit a detached garage/accessory building within a front yard with a reduced front yard setback of 13 feet and an increased building height of 22 feet, 10 inches, where the Land Development Code requires a minimum 25-foot front yard setback, placement within a side or rear yard, and a maximum height of 18 feet

Mayor Williams introduced this item and turned the floor over to Ms. Warner. Ms. Warner introduced and reviewed variance request Z26-08 which is to allow the placement of a detached garage/accessory building within the front yard. She explained that per the LDC's, all accessory buildings are to be in the side or rear yard. Ms. Warner also commented that this is a corner lot consisting of two front setbacks and two rear setbacks. She stated the Development Review Board heard this item and has recommended approval with a condition. Ms. Warner reviewed the conditions as the height of the proposed may not exceed 18', consistent with current LDC requirements regarding the height of accessory buildings that do not meet the same setbacks as the principal building, and the existing carport located in the property's front yard along East 2nd Avenue must be removed prior to issuance of the building permit for the proposed detached garage/accessory building. Member Davit made a motion to approve the request. Member David seconded the motion. Some discussion followed. Mr. James Pruitt, owner, addressed the Council, explaining the constraints that make other placement options infeasible. He noted that moving the structure further back would encroach on the existing pool, placing it on the opposite side would create a large structure abutting multiple neighbors' rear yards with no practical access route, and traversing the drainage ditch along Oakdale Street would be required to reach the structure. He characterized the proposed location as the most practical and least impactful, noting it abuts a neighbor's garage with only a garage window facing it, and is oriented toward a commercial cell tower property rather than a residential neighbor. Member Allen stated she is not in favor of the variance. She stated that protection of the aesthetics and the rural area is needed. Mr. Pruitt commented on his property that does not face another home, which makes his lot unique. After some discussion was made, roll call vote was as follows: David – aye, Davit – aye, and Allen – nay. Motion carried 2-1.

d. CONTRACTS & AGREEMENTS

i. 2025 Town Manager Evaluations

Mayor Williams summarized the annual evaluation process for Town Manager Robert Smith, covering the 2025 evaluation period. Performance evaluations were submitted by five Council members and the outgoing Mayor. The evaluations reflected an overall positive review with an average score of 7.74 out of 10 across all scored categories. Areas of recognized strength included implementation of Council direction, advancement of major infrastructure and capital projects, fiscal management, intergovernmental coordination, and day-to-day operational stability. Areas identified for continued improvement included resident communication, transparency and proactive reporting, staff development, public outreach, and planning of complex issues prior to Council consideration. Mayor Williams noted that Town Manager Smith's contract provides for a minimum 3 percent annual increase when evaluations are positive, unless Council determines a raise is not financially feasible. Member Davit made a motion on to approve a 3% salary increase for Manager Smith. Member David seconded the motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Allen – aye, Davit – aye, and David – aye. Motion carried 3-0.

e. OTHER ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

i. Amendment to Urban County Interlocal Agreement

This item was introduced by staff. Attorney Ramos identified it as the First Amendment to the Urban County Interlocal Cooperation Agreement with Orange County for participation in HUD community development programs (CDBG, HOME, and ESG). Town Attorney Ramos explained that the

amendment updates the applicable federal regulatory citations and the notice provisions in the existing agreement. Town Manager Smith noted that the Town has executed this agreement for the past five years and that there is no direct financial commitment from the Town of Windermere. Assistant Town Manager/Public Works Director Tonya Elliott-Moore added that while the Town generally does not qualify for CDBG grants due to income thresholds, continued participation could provide access to funding for ADA compliance improvements. The agreement was noted as time-sensitive, with a deadline of July 31st. Councilman David noted that the amended agenda item had not been distributed to Council via email and requested that future amended agendas be sent out appropriately. Clerk Burkhalter stated she would check with staff regarding the re-distribution of the amended agenda. Member Davit made a motion to approve the agreement. Member David seconded the motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Allen – aye, Davit – aye, and David – aye. Motion carried 3-0.

5. MAYOR & COUNCIL LIAISON REPORTS:

Mayor Williams opened the floor to the council members for any reports. Member David reported that Parks and Recreation is working the Run Among the Lakes. Member Davit stated that Long Range Planning is scheduled to meet July 24th.

6. STAFF REPORTS:

a. TOWN MANAGER ROBERT SMITH – Manager Smith reported on the successful Pancake Breakfast, projects, Mayors/Managers meeting, property tax reform and upcoming meetings. Mayor Williams requested that Manager Smith compile and distribute a set of confirmed dates for September outreach sessions so the Town could begin promoting them to residents in advance. Discussion followed regarding the property tax reform. Manager Smith then stated that the July Town Council workshop will be held regarding Town Hall rentals. He then commented on the new communications hire.

b. ATM/PWD TONYA ELLIOTT-MOORE – ATM/PWD Elliott-Moore reported on the Bridge, West 2nd Avenue and Bessie/Butler projects.

c. ATTORNEY HEATHER RAMOS – Attorney Ramos reported two notable developments regarding the proposed property tax constitutional amendment. First, the Governor announced he is no longer campaigning in support of the amendment, citing the legislature's modifications — specifically the exclusion of school taxes and a lower-than-desired phase-out schedule. Second, the Governor vetoed the sovereign immunity bill, which would have raised liability caps on governmental entities. Town Attorney Ramos noted that the Governor's stated rationale was concern over greater tort liability exposure for state and local governments, higher insurance costs, and an increase in meritless lawsuits.

d. CHIEF DAVE OGDEN – Chief Ogden reported that summer training schedules are underway and testing announcements have been distributed, with an additional announcement to follow the next day.

e. TOWN CLERK DOROTHY BURKHALTER – Clerk Burkhalter announced that she had accepted an invitation to join the Board of Directors of ARMA (Association of Records Managers and Administrators) and was congratulated by the Council.

7. ADJOURN:

Mayor Williams adjourned the meeting at 7:14pm.

Dorothy Burkhalter, MMC, FCRM
Town Clerk

Loren "Andy" Williams, Mayor